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ABSTRACT

The booklet contains a collection of separate short guidelines, checklists, and recommendations for parents and teachers of young gifted children and is divided into sections on characteristics/identification, parenting, and maximizing the child's potential. Titles of components include the following: "Characteristics of Advanced Abilities in Young Children," "Preschool Gifted Behavioral Check List," "Test Method of Identification," "Role as Parent--Suggestions for Parenting Children with Advanced Abilities," "Child Management," "Observational Guidelines for Preschool Programs," "Extending a Child's Thinking," and "Products for the Cognitive Levels." A bibliography of 28 references and a one page list of periodicals for adult and student reference completes the booklet. (DB)

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Young Children With Advanced Abilities

Information For Parents and Teachers

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The Gifted Association of Missouri
The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Arthur L. Mallory, Commissioner of Education

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FOREWORD

Identification of advanced abilities following the screening of a young child is only an indicator that, at the present time, the child is exhibiting qualities two or more years beyond his/her chronological age. He/she is also above the 90th percentile in the areas of expressive and receptive language and motor development, including eye-hand coordination. This does not necessarily indicate the presence of "giftedness" in a child.

This booklet of information was compiled by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Gifted Association of Missouri (GAM). GAM is a nonprofit organization of parents, laypersons, and educators. GAM's major purpose is to promote an awareness of and programming for gifted children.

Those who have worked to put this booklet together are: Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Deborah Murphy, Director, Early Childhood Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Judy Grimes, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and Susan Cole, Ella Jones, Don Flanagan, Betsy Roberson, and Teresa Humphries, GAM Preschool Task Force Members.

For additional copies of this booklet or further information about young gifted children, contact Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Post Office Box 480, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102. Information is also available about a booklet for parents of gifted children titled The Gifted: Meeting Their Needs at Home and School.

To become a member of the Gifted Association of Missouri, send $10.00 with your name, address, and zip code to Marjorie Bramer, Treasurer-GAM, 7336 Oakmont, Route 3, Nixa, Missouri 65714

CHARACTERISTICS AND IDENTIFICATION

CHARACTERISTICS OF

ADVANCED ABILITIES IN YOUNG CHILDREN

It is a challenging responsibility of parenthood to identify superior abilities in one's children through observation. As a guide in recognizing highly able children of preschool age, the following characteristics may be used as identification signposts. Few children will display all of these characteristics, but children identified as having "advanced abilities" will display abilities in several areas two years or more beyond the chronological age of peers.

Signs of Early Development
Birth to Two Years of Age (or by two years of age)

Language (receptive)

Enjoys being read to and exhibits sustained interest
Follows directions of more than two steps
Understands and responds to conversation
Can point to body parts and objects named

Language (expressive)

Has larger than usual vocabulary for his/her age
Can repeat simple songs or rhymes
Combines words into simple sentences

Fine Motor

Sits and stands before six months
Can walk up and down stairs with little help
Walks earlier than others his age (8-9 months)
Feeds self neatly
Works simple puzzles
Stacks blocks
Kicks and throws ball

General Cognition (intellect)

Has unusually quick, sharp memory
Learns new information quickly
Has longer than usual attention span
Figures out how things work

Decision Making

Persists in a task

Creativity

Shows high degree of curiosity
Enjoys experimenting with toys and finding new ways to play with them
Uses trial and error in experimenting

Leadership/Social

Initiates own play activities
Plays independently
Joins others at play for short periods
Can be stubborn

Signs of Early Development
Two to Five Years of Age

Language (receptive)

Can execute complicated instructions (can remember and successfully complete three-five step directions)
Is unusually sensitive to disturbing sounds
Understands information beyond his/her age
Can attend to stories or conversation for prolonged periods of time

Language (expressive)

Displays excellent command of language
Is able to fluently express ideas in logical order
Enjoys using long words
Participates in meaningful conversations
Asks many questions with frequent "whys"

Fine Motor (and physical competence)

May show proficiency in art forms
Easily performs difficult manual tasks
Learned to dress self completely including zipping, buttoning, lacing, and tying bows earlier than others his/her age
Has high energy level, is active and energetic
Has superior physique, coordination and endurance

General Cognition

Transfers learning to new situations
Understands counting, can show one-to-one relationship
Learned to read early (on his/her own)
Knows colors
Prefers activities that require thinking
Remembers stories and poems almost word for word
Tries to find rules and reasons for why things happen
Shows interest in and understanding of time
Organizes thoughts well
Displays great curiosity
Has excellent memory for a wide range of information
Justifies own actions

Decision Making

Has good reasoning ability
Recognizes relationships easily
Analyzes situations quickly
Thinks quickly
Figures out solutions to problems
Shows insight
Exhibits independence in thought and action

Creativity

Shows interest in and aptitude in many areas
Exhibits talent in a special area such as music or art
Creates games and other play activities
Is highly imaginative
Is highly elaborative, pictures and stories have more detail
Constructs intersting shapes and patterns using blocks and clay
Is impatient with routine tasks
Has unique and original ideas

Leadership/Social

Is trustworthy and dependable
Wants decisions to be fair
Displays thoughtfulness towards others
Is able to organize people and ideas
Senses right and wrong
Adjusts to change easily
Wants work to be perfect
Has high expectations of self and others
Enjoys working and playing alone
Prefers company of older children
Has strong sense of humor
Is willing to share
Assumes responsibility
Maintains consistent mood
Is self-confident
Tends to dominate
Is persistent
Assumes, or is chosen by peers, for a leadership role

Compiled by Ella Jones, Reading Consultant, Hazelwood R-I School District, Florissant, Missouri.

TWENTY-THREE SIGNALS OF CREATIVITY

Below are twenty-three characteristics that signal creativity in children and some sample statements by children that reflect those traits. The list was developed by Dr. E. Paul Torrance, distinguished Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Georgia. While few children will display all of the characteristics, several of them in combination indicate creative promise in your child that should be nurtured at home and school.

_____ 1. Intense absorption in listening, observing or doing, "But I did not hear you call me for dinner!"

_____ 2. Intense animation and physical involvement. "But I cannot sit still--I am thinking."

_____ 3. Use of analogies in speech. "I feel like a caterpillar waiting to become a butterfly."

_____ 4. Tendency to challenge ideas of authorities. "Why do I have to go to school until I am 16?"

_____ 5. Habit of checking many sources. "Mom, I looked at all the books and watched a TV special and asked my teacher, and I still cannot figure out where God lives."

_____ 6. Taking a close look at things. "Hey, this centipede only has ninety-nine legs!"

_____ 7. Eagerness to tell others about discoveries. "Guess what! Guess what! Guess what!"

_____ 8. Continuing in creative activities after scheduled time for quitting. "I did my artwork right through recess!"

_____ 9. Showing relationship among apparently unrelated ideas. "Hey, Mom, your new hat looks just like a flying saucer!"

_____ 10. Following through on an idea set in motion. "Tomorrow I am going to dig for gold in our backyard."

_____ 11. Various manifestations of curiosity and wanting to know. "I just wanted to know what the yard looked like from the top of the roof."

_____ 12. Spontaneous use of discovery or experimental approval. "I thought flour and water would make bread, but all I got was white goo."

_____ 13. Excitement in voice about discoveries. "Flour and water make paste!"

_____ 14. Habit of guessing and testing outcomes. "I put detergent in the birdbath, but no birds came to clean up. Can I try some bubble bath today?"

_____ 15. Honesty and intense search for truth. "Mom, I hope this won't upset you, but I don't think there is a tooth fairy."

_____ 16. Independent action. "There are no good books on racing cars, Dad. I am going to write my own."

_____ 17. Boldness of new ideas. "But I think that children should be allowed to vote."

_____ 18. Low distractability. "I cannot come out to play. I'm waiting for my chemical to dissolve."

_____ 19. Manipulation of ideas and objects to obtain new combinations. "I'm going to take this string and this pencil and make a compass."

_____ 20. Penetrating observations and questions. "When the snow melts, where does the white go?"

_____ 21. Tendency to seek alternatives and explore new possibilities. "This old shoe would make a great flowerpot."

_____ 22. Self-initiated learning. "Yesterday I went to the library and checked out all the books on dinosaurs."

_____ 23. Willingness to consider or toy with new ideas. "What if dogs were masters and people were pets?"

Taken from the "Gifted Children's Newsletter," Sewell, New Jersey.

OBSERVATIONAL METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION

"Baby-book" records usually include facts about a child's growth and development. Dates, such as when your child first talked or walked, give an indication of abilities developing more rapidly than chronological age norms show.

Anecdotal records are short descriptions of something a child did or said that seemed unusual, perceptive or advanced when compared with the responses of other children the child's age, in the same situation. Observant parents, preschool teachers or day care workers should write down events as they are noticed.

Parents often can recount humorous events involving their child which sound unbelievable, yet are true. A parent often "knows" his child has advanced abilities, before others recognize it.

Informal assessment does not have to be elaborate or complicated. It does have to be specific and organized. Consider the major areas of developmental skills for young children:

- Language skills (expressive and receptive)
- Cognitive skills
- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Self-help skills (eating, dressing, et cetera)
- Social or behavioral skills
- Perceptual skills

Using developmental charts, assess and evaluate the child's performance on various tasks. Most of the assessment can be done through informal observation. Books on child development, with developmental charts, are available at the library. Use specialists for additional help--language development sequences are available from a speech therapist, motor skill development from a pediatrician, cognitive skill sequence development from a preschool teacher.

Compiled by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

PRESCHOOL GIFTED BEHAVIORAL CHECK LIST

Child's Name:

Check list completed by:

teacher _____

parent _____

Directions: Read the statements below. Draw a circle around the letter or letters representing the words in the right-hand columns which best reflect the behavior of this child. Circle only one response for each statement.

AS = Agree strongly

A = Agree

D = Disagree

DS = Disagree strongly

1.	Walked early	AS	A	D	DS
2.	Talked early	AS	A	D	DS
3.	Can read	AS	A	D	DS
4.	Likes to read	AS	A	D	DS
5.	Points to objects while counting	AS	A	D	DS
6.	Shows impatience with tasks around the house that have no meaning	AS	A	D	DS
7.	Asks "why" frequently	AS	A	D	DS
8.	Figures out how things work	AS	A	D	DS
9.	Collects things	AS	A	D	DS
10.	Has larger than usual vocabulary for his age	AS	A	D	DS
11.	Is able to verbally express his ideas easily	AS	A	D	DS
12.	Names more than the basic colors--red, yellow, and blue	AS	A	D	DS
13.	Has long attention span	AS	A	D	DS
14.	Has quick, sharp memory	AS	A	D	DS

15.	Learns new material quickly	AS	A	D	DS
16.	Is bored with normal activities	AS	A	D	DS
17.	Is impatient with note work	AS	A	D	DS
18.	Is anxious about work being perfect	AS	A	D	DS
19.	Sees more than one solution to a problem	AS	A	D	DS
20.	Follows directions when more than one is given at a time	AS	A	D	DS
21.	Justifies own actions	AS	A	D	DS
22.	Shows interest in and understanding of time	AS	A	D	DS
23.	Has difficulty making friends	AS	A	D	DS
24.	Prefers solitary activities	AS	A	D	DS
25.	Adjusts to change easily	AS	A	D	DS
26.	Shows interest and aptitude in many areas	AS	A	D	DS
27.	Shows unusual talent in a special area such as music or art	AS	A	D	DS
28.	Easily performs difficult manual tasks	AS	A	D	DS
29.	Tries to find rules and reasons for why things happen	AS	A	D	DS
30.	Creates games and other play activities	AS	A	D	DS
31.	Remembers stories and poems almost word for word	AS	A	D	DS
32.	Finds more than one use for an object	AS	A	D	DS
33.	Creates make believe	AS	A	D	DS
34.	Watches television documentaries as well as other programs	AS	A	D	DS
35.	Doesn't like to wait for others to catch up with his or her work	AS	A	D	DS
36.	Sticks to a task longer	AS	A	D	DS
37.	Chooses the company of those who are older	AS	A	D	DS
38.	Can carry on a meaningful conversation	AS	A	D	DS

39.	Draws pictures with more detail	AS	A	D	DS
40.	Plays tunes that are recognizable	AS	A	D	DS
41.	Can sing several songs with accuracy	AS	A	D	DS
42.	Prefers activities that require thinking	AS	A	D	DS
43.	Prefers activities with minimal social involvement	AS	A	D	DS
44.	Is more trustworthy	AS	A	D	DS
45.	Displays strong sense of humor in his play and other activities	AS	A	D	DS
46.	Wants decisions and people to be fair	AS	A	D	DS
47.	Shows unusual sensitivity to other's feelings	AS	A	D	DS
48.	Is unusually sensitive to sounds that are disturbing	AS	A	D	DS
49.	Prefers quiet environment	AS	A	D	DS
50.	Has ability to organize people	AS	A	D	DS
51.	Has ability to organize things	AS	A	D	DS
52.	Has high energy level	AS	A	D	DS
53.	Has ability to "pull out" meaningful information	AS	A	D	DS

Compiled by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Name of student _____ Age _____

Address _____ School _____ Grade _____

Parent's Name _____

INSTRUCTIONS: In relationship to the typical child, please circle a number for each item which best describes your child. 5 - has this trait to a high degree; 4 - has this trait more than the typical child; 3 - compares with the typical child; 2 - has this trait less than the typical child; 1 - lacks this trait.

1.	Has advanced vocabulary, expresses himself or herself well	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Thinks quickly	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Recalls facts easily	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Wants to know how things work	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Learned to read before starting kindergarten	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Is an avid reader	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Has lots of original ideas	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Puts unrelated ideas together in new and different ways	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Becomes bored easily	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Asks reasons why - questions almost everything	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Likes to be with older people	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Has a great deal of curiosity	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Is adventurous	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Has a good sense of humor	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Is impulsive, acts before he thinks	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Tends to dominate others if given the chance	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Is persistent, sticks to a task	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Has good physical coordination and body control	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Is independent and self-sufficient in looking after himself	5	4	3	2	1

20.	Keen and alert observer - usually "sees more or gets more" from story, film, et cetera, than others	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Has long attention span	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Enjoys learning	5	4	3	2	1
23.	Uses unique and unusual methods of solving problems	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Is imaginative	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Is able to plan and organize activities	5	4	3	2	1
26.	Has wide range of interests	5	4	3	2	1
27.	Sets high standards for self and others	5	4	3	2	1
28.	Has an exceptional ability in math	5	4	3	2	1
29.	Has an exceptional ability in science	5	4	3	2	1
30.	Has an exceptional ability in creative writing	5	4	3	2	1
31.	Has much energy which gets him into trouble at times	5	4	3	2	1
32.	Shows more interest in creative effort and new activities than in routine and repetitive tasks	5	4	3	2	1
33.	Likes "puzzles" and various kinds of "problem" games	5	4	3	2	1
34.	Has the ability to think in abstract rather than concrete	5	4	3	2	1

35. What hobbies or special interests does your child have? _____

_____

36. How does your child feel about reading? _____

_____

37. What kinds of things does he/she read? _____

_____

38. What is his/her favorite school subject? _____

_____

39. What is his/her attitude about school? _____

_____

40. What is his/her favorite leisure-time activity? _____

_____

41. What responsibilities does he/she have at home? _____

_____

42. What special lessons, training or experiences has he/she had outside of school? _____

43. List any factors that you feel may be keeping him/her from reaching his/her full capabilities. (Physical handicaps, environmental influences, learning disabilities, emotional or psychological factors.)

_____

_____

44. What other things would you like us to know that would help us in providing the most appropriate learning experiences for your child?

_____

_____

Compiled by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

TEST METHOD OF IDENTIFICATION

There are formal tests of intelligence and achievement which have been adapted for very young children. The following are possibilities, not an extensive list of all available tests:

Screening Instruments

- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R)

  This is a test of single-word vocabulary. The examiner pronounces a word, and the child selects the corresponding picture. It provides a broad measure of receptive vocabulary.

- Preschool Embedded Figures Test (PEFT)

  This is a series of three practice items and twenty-four test items. The items are black- and white-line drawings of familiar objects embedded in a simple geometric form. The young child who is able to find the hidden form is thought to be more analytical in problem solving and to possess a higher level of intellectual ability.

- Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT)

  This test provides a quick estimate of achievement in five areas: 1) mathematics; 2) reading recognition; 3) reading comprehension; 4) spelling; and 5) general information. This test is suitable for ages 5 years and up.

Identification Instruments

- Stanford Binet Intelligence Test

  This is a test of general intellectual ability. The test items are arranged by age level. At each age level, six tests are administered. Vocabulary, memory, abstract reasoning, numerical concepts, and visual-motor skills are assessed. This test is suitable for children ages 2-plus years and up.

- Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R)

  This test is designed to test broad aspects of general intelligence. There are two main parts: a Verbal Scale and a Performance Scale. The Verbal Scale Subtests are Information, Similarities, Arithmetic, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The Performance Scale Subtests include Picture Completion, Picture Arrangement, Block Design, Object Assembly, and Coding (or Mazes). Block design is often considered to be the best nonverbal measure of intelligence. This test is suitable for ages 6-plus years and up.

- Weschler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI)

  This test is intended for use with children between the ages of four and six and one-half years. The subtests for the Verbal Scale are Information, Comprehension, Arithmetic, Similarities, Vocabulary, and Sentences. The subtests on the Performance Scale are Picture Completion, Block Design, Animal House, Mazes, and Geometric Design.

- Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC)

  This test assesses both intelligence and achievement. There are ten subtests for mental processing and six subtests for achievement. The test is adaptable for hearing impaired, speech and language disordered, and non-English speaking children. This test is suitable for children ages 2-plus years and up.

Compiled by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

PARENTING

ROLE AS PARENT

It's As Easy As ABC!
Suggestions for Parenting Children with Advanced Abilities

A. Give them your love, Remember, they are still children. They need assurance, encouragement, controls, and discipline.

B. Help them to perform tasks themselves--to count, tell time, use correct vocabulary and pronunciation. Help them locate themselves and become familiar with their local surroundings, their neighborhood, and their city.

C. Encourage them to assume responsibility for their own actions--put away what they get out, pick up what they spill, give and take messages accurately.

D. Read to your children. Early verbal expression, music, art, poetry, and reading are valuable beyond measure.

E. We retain more strongly what we learn in our youth. Therefore, answer all questions accurately and honestly, to the depth required.

F. Encourage a healthy body. Let them learn to play ball, swim, ride a bike, and develop good physical motor ability skills.

G. Children need one or two good friends. Playmates with similar interests or capabilities are advocated, but not to the exclusion of all others.

H. Parents must take the initiative in taking children to museums, art galleries, educational institutions, historical places, and so on. Open their world to encompass as many and varied experiences as possible.

I. Become familiar with your nearest public library. Help your child locate good books in the areas in which he expresses interest. Magazines, encyclopedias, charts, and so on, play an important role.

J. Avoid "pushing" a child to read. Avoid "exhibiting" him before others. There is a difference between pushing and intellectual stimulation.

K. If you can, give him the advantage of private lessons in some skill in which he expresses an interest or excels.

L. Avoid, however, overstructuring their lives. Children need time to be alone, to rely on their own ingenuity, to choose what they want to do, and contemplate or daydream as the mood strikes. They cannot be expected to perform at top capacity at all times.

M. A quiet talk alone with the child should help when there is a disciplinary lapse. These children are much more amenable to rational argument and though usually strong-willed, have a well-developed sense of duty.

O. Offer them choices. Encourage in them the ability to make decisions.

P. Take time to be with them. Listen to what they have to say. Discuss their ideas. It isn't as much what you do for them as what you do with them.

Q. Provide challenging things to do. Be as innovative and creative as you can, especially in the areas of their current interest. Expand those interests and open new horizons.

R. Encourage common courtesy and the respect for the rights of others.

S. Be a worthy example yourself. Try to find worthy adult figures of both sexes for him to know.

T. Do not demean others in his presence--especially his teacher. It is a learning experience to learn to cope with many personalities. Remember, too, teacher and parent should have common goals. They may employ different methods to achieve them.

U. Show him better ways of phrasing a question or making a suggestion if needed. How much more receptive people are to "Would this be a good idea . . ." rather than "That's a dumb idea. I have a better one!"

V. Encourage him to use his talents, creativity, and special abilities. Find someone competent in the specific field in which he shows interest or unusual promise and, usually, they will be glad to offer suggestions and guidance. (We all like someone who is interested in what we are!)

W. Respect the child and his knowledge. Be open-minded and ready to listen. The day will come when his knowledge far exceeds your own in some areas.

X. Keep abreast of your child's progress. Keep him as challenged and stimulated as you can. Learning should be fun!

Y. Keep a level head and a sense of humor. Though your child is smart, there is always someone smarter. Remember, everyone is a genius at something. Perhaps it's in getting along with people. That's really a useful talent! Do not put undue emphasis on advanced abilities, especially within the child's presence. Remember the physical, social, and emotional aspects of a child's development are important, too.

Z. Appreciate the satisfaction of knowing you are doing your best, although the joys of excellence are tempered by frustrations with the school system, lack of understanding by many, and the fact that these children will keep you busier than you could ever imagine!

Adapted from an article written by Rosemary Gladieux in the September/October 1981 issue of G/C/T. Reproduced with permission of "G/C/T - The World's Most Popular Magazine for Parents and Teachers of Gifted, Creative, and Talented Children," Post Office Box 6448, Mobile, Alabama 36660.

QUIZ FOR THE PARENT OF THE CHILD WITH ADVANCED ABILITIES

Being the parent of a child with advanced abilities isn't easy. At the very least, you must walk on your toes at all times and have excellent peripheral vision. And sometimes--if only from a parental point of view--"things still go wrong." There are times when you wonder just how well you're doing. The list of questions below may help you decide--for the moment at least--how things are going between you and your youngster.

-- Do you answer your child's question with patience and good humor?

-- Do you take advantage of questions and expressions of interest to guide your child into further learning experiences and explorations?

-- Do you help your child to develop physical and social skills as carefully as you encourage mental growth?

-- Do you help your child learn how to get along with children of all levels of ability?

-- Do you avoid comparing your child with brothers and sisters or companions?

-- Do you show love for its own sake and not for intellectual achievement?

-- Do you set reasonable standards of behavior for your child and see that they are met?

-- Do you try to find something specific to praise when your child shows his or her work?

-- Do you help your child find worthwhile and challenging reading materials and television programs?

-- Do you provide hobby materials and books?

-- Do you find places where your child can study and work at hobbies?

-- Do you find a place to display your child's work?

-- Do you let your child learn about and share in some of your hobbies and interests?

-- Do you take your child on trips to points of interest?

-- Do you provide your child with lessons and activities which are available through private groups, universities or community organizations?

-- Do you teach your child how to budget time, organize work, and improve study habits?

-- Do you help your child make plans and provide opportunities for your child to make decisions?

-- Do you give your child increasing independence as the ability to handle responsibility increases?

-- Do you provide household responsibilities and other tasks suitable to your child's age level?

No one can grade the parent on this quiz, not even the parent who takes it. However, any parent who takes the time to read this list of questions is obviously a concerned and caring parent.

Adapted from the Gifted Education Packet compiled by the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association.

CHILD MANAGEMENT

Young children and young children with advanced abilities are similar in many ways. They are all young children with emotional needs typical of their age. Children with advanced abilities have the capacity to do many things faster and better than others. They question more and understand more. They are less willing to accept adult explanations which they feel are not logical or too forceful. They can be hard to handle and cause family friction because they don't conform. They have special needs, incredible energy, and unrelenting persistence. These qualities may add additional stress to a family and should be dealt with.

Their independence and ability to organize people and things may enable these children to run their family, keeping parents off-balance and not in control of family interaction. Children's awareness that they are able to manipulate their family and their natural need for parental control and structure will cause turmoil within them. If they always have their own way and get to come first, they will be uneasy with themselves and their family will resent them. They cannot be allowed to dominate their family. It is the responsibility of the parents to allow children to grow and develop in all ways, yet set appropriate limits. Children need guidance to achieve self-direction, supervision to learn to live freely, and rules and limits to learn self-control.

Parents cannot change their children, but they can change their methods of coping with and responding to them in order to encourage positive family interaction. All conflict cannot be avoided, but it can be reduced by using creative approaches in dealing with children.

- Establish trust by building a warm and sincere relationship with your children.
- Communicate openly.
- Treat children as people.
- Listen attentively when they talk.
- Don't be judgmental.
- Allow them to have their opinions, then share your opinions and feelings.
- Use nonverbal messages with your children--touch, smile, nod, looks.
- Offer the children praise and encouragement.
- Try to overlook small annoyances and ignore provocations.
- Testing limits is children's way of being in control of their life.
- Allow them to make choices when a choice is reasonable.

- Don't offer a choice when the situation doesn't allow one.
- Set firm limits on specific risks, respecting children's feelings but stating firmly what the needs of the situation are and that they must be met.
- Be willing to be flexible and reconsider.
- Make sure rules are fair and apply to all.
- Children need an increasing measure of independence and self-responsibility.
- Be consistent and encourage cooperation.

There are no magical solutions to managing children's behavior, and the parent and child will need to work out the best way for their family to get along well. Natural and logical consequences to children's actions keep the parent from becoming directly involved in a confrontation. Ignoring inappropriate behavior when possible or removing children from the situation keeps them from gaining an audience for negative behavior. Taking time out allows both the parent and child an opportunity to regain control of themselves and should last as long as necessary for things to calm down. Young children with advanced abilities have an enormous need for private time; thus, a "time out" period should be used as a time for regrouping, not as punishment.

Opportunities to positively interact with peers are vitally important. The social and emotional growth of young children is as important as their intellectual growth. Those with advanced abilities need opportunities to be with children of similar intellectual ability, but also need to learn to get along with age mates. Peers with equally advanced abilities offer the greatest test of a child's ability to get along. Encourage children to discuss, not argue, when disagreements arise. They need to learn to share different points of view and to solve their own problems. Children can learn to state what they think happened, listen to what you think happened, state how they felt, state how they think others might have felt, and decide on an alternative and acceptable behavior. Young children need to learn to settle arguments verbally.

The goal is to help children develop self-control. Children's self-esteem must be maintained or enhanced. Help children understand why things are happening. When all else fails, take a step back, take a deep breath, take one day at a time, and take comfort in the knowledge that there are thousands of parents of children with advanced abilities out there thinking and feeling the same things you are.

Compiled by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

PARENT ADVOCACY

As a parent of a child with advanced abilities, your responsibilities are considerable and may be quite time consuming. Along with meeting the needs of your own child, other children with advanced abilities also need your support and advocacy for them before, during, and after your own child's specific needs are your primary concern.

- Find out if there is a parent organization for children with advanced abilities in your city.
- Explore the educational opportunities at your elementary school now to discover what will be available for your children as they progress through school.
- Work together with local educators.
- Be aware of local and State Board of Education policies that can help you provide a more flexible educational program for your child.
- Join your local and state associations for children with advanced abilities.
- Find other parents with children of similar abilities.
- Learn from parents with older children of advanced abilities who have already experienced situations you will encounter.
- If opportunities for your child do not exist in your area, you and other parents may work to initiate them.

At home, provide an open, accepting atmosphere where challenge and risk taking are valued. Provide exposure to a wide variety of topics, disciplines, and media in order to capitalize on children's strengths and interests. A large portion of your direct interaction should be spent in open-ended questioning that has no right or wrong answers and cannot be answered by yes or no. In this way, you, as parents, are actively engaged in the learning process with your children.

Find out what your community has to offer. If you live in a small, rural community, make frequent trips to a more urban area. Check your local community education classes, nearby college or university, libraries, zoos, museums, businesses, art and music programs, theater programs, and publications. The list can be endless and the exposure critical.

There are several educational options available to children with advanced abilities. As your children's first and primary teacher, you have a unique opportunity to teach by example, setting standards of reliability, honesty, and openness for your children to follow. Enrichment programs provide stimulation and a wide variety of experiences. They may include Saturday classes or extracurricular activities such as sports, museums, arts, sciences, libraries, school-sponsored groups, and excursions.

When seeking a preschool or day-care experience, be familiar with the characteristics of a good program. The staff should be comprised of trained, certified, enthusiastic, and experienced personnel who enjoy working with young children and who understand the special needs of young children with advanced abilities. These specialists understand that the first few years of life are critical to children's development and that early identification of advanced abilities and appropriate programming are essential to them in realizing their full potential.

The classroom should be a learning environment where young children can explore their own interests, acquire skills, and knowledge at their own pace and take responsibility for their own learning. They need a place where they feel safe and secure in trying new tasks. The curriculum should have as its goals: developing a healthy, realistic self-concept; acquiring appropriate and effective interpersonal skills; establishing positive attitudes towards school and learning; increasing exploratory behavior and risk taking; and facilitating creative and productive thinking. There should be a wide variety of readily accessible resources, materials, and activities.

Children will have advanced abilities all of their lives. Enabling them to deal positively with their educational and emotional experiences now will have a life-long effect.

The above material was compiled from contributors Pat Hoelscher, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Susan Cole, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Teresa Humphries, Department of Child Psychiatry, University of Missouri-Columbia; and Betsy Roberson, Special School District of St. Louis County.

MAXIMIZING A CHILD'S POTENTIAL

OBSERVATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

There are many factors to be considered when parents decide for their young child to interact with other young children on a regular basis. Some considerations relate to cost, location of home, school or work, and parental schedules. Given those constraints for a particular family, let's look at the special needs and vulnerabilities of a young gifted child and how to meet those needs in a preschool/day care setting. The program's physical setting, the relationships within the classroom, and the curriculum must all be considered.

The physical space should allow for individual developmental progress:

- Is there a place where the child can get off by himself?
- Are there places for privacy--for thinking or looking at books alone?
- Are there materials for structured activities--puzzles, dominoes, pegs?
- Are there materials for open-ended learning--paint, clay, woodworking, dramatic play?
- Is the schedule rigidly adhered to or is there flexibility?
- Are there some activities that always occur at a certain time?
- Do children have extended time for an activity if they become intensely involved?

Learning will only take place when there is trust and support:

- Does the teacher show respect for a child's ideas, feelings, and abilities?
- Does he/she show tolerance for child-like impatience, self-assertion, bragging, negativism, tears, and testing behavior?
- Are teacher's questions open-ended and thought-producing?
- Are limits explained and freedom allowed within those limits?
- Are groups of children kept small enough so children get to know each other?
- Is the number of children, the noise, and the commotion reasonable and manageable?
- Are interactions between children encouraged?
- Is interest in and respect for differences in children encouraged?

- Do teachers keep parents informed about class activities?
- Is the parent informed of the child's progress or problems either formally or informally?
- Are reasons for classroom procedures shared with parents?
- Do teachers and parents share information back and forth about the child and the program?
- What is done to stimulate parents' interest in the program?

The curriculum content, teaching strategies, and social/emotional climate of the classroom help children increase their understanding of themselves and others and increase their ability to act on that understanding:

- Does the curriculum meet the child's needs, interests, and learning styles?
- Is the curriculum appropriate for the child's developmental level?
- Does the program build self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence?
- Do the children help in the maintenance of the room?
- Are most activities initiated by the children, or by the teacher, or is there a balance?
- What happens to children who finish an activity early, while others are still involved?
- How are children encouraged to complete a task?
- Do children show an awareness of each other and, at least, a temporary enjoyment of each other?
- Are natural-choice groupings allowed or does the teacher make the groupings?
- Are there opportunities for quiet reflection, as well as involvement?
- Are there changes of pace throughout the day?
- Are children allowed to make choices within clearly defined limits?

Compiled by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

THE "IDEAL" TEACHER

Describing the "ideal" teacher of the gifted was a task given a group of gifted students. Initially, a list of adjectives was compiled. With great thought and deliberation, the students narrowed the list to discriminate between characteristics desirable in a good teacher and qualities essential for a teacher of the gifted. The students realized that no teacher could possess all essential characteristics, so they rank-ordered the traits in the following manner:

- Creative
- Understanding
- Patient
- Honest
- Able to listen to both sides of an issue
- Able to adapt to every different class they teach
- Able to communicate well
- Open-minded
- Friendly
- Knowledgeable
- Interesting
- Flexible
- Does things with the students

If a teacher like this is to be found, it was decided that questions different from the usual needed to be asked during the job interview. The students hoped that the following questions would allow the necessary essential qualities to surface:

- Do you like kids?
- Are you talented in anything? If so, what?
- What goals do you plan to achieve in your life?
- Do you think of yourself as a calm, patient person?
- What do you value most in your life?
- If you could not teach, what else would you do for a job?

- What special qualities do you have?
- Have you ever invented anything?
- Why do you think you should have this job?
- How much do you really like yourself? Why?
- How young are you?

Gifted students want in their teachers personal integrity, sensitivity, openness, and understanding. If we want to develop these qualities in our gifted students, it is necessary for their teachers to possess them.

Adapted by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dear Teacher of the Gifted,

Who is the least popular, most misunderstood teacher in your district? A safe bet is the gifted facilitator. You are probably more than tired of hearing how easy everyone else's job would be if all they had were "smart kids." Well, take heart! There are those who understand how tough your job is and know the battles you must fight. The real key to better understanding of your kids lies with you. You know and love them. Well, most of the time. If you don't fight their battles, along with their parents, they won't be fought.

Teaching gifted kids is not for the faint-hearted. They are impossible to bluff. They love to point out your mistakes. To their way of thinking, it is all part of the game. It is to your advantage to use these occasions to show them that one can make a mistake, and the world will not cave in. In fact, everyone involved can learn. Teachers who have to be right all the time do not belong in the gifted classroom.

No one says to the soloist in the school choir, the number-one chair in the orchestra, the lead in the play, the quarterback, that their programs are being disbanded because they serve only the best in the field. After all, you must be talented to belong to those programs, and participation depends on ability. Why then do we single out the gifted? All they ask is an opportunity for an appropriate education, and it is essential that they receive it.

These are special, wonderful, promising kids, and it takes a teacher with extraordinary ability and love to effectively channel their talents. With every teacher you reach, parent you help, student you guide, you advance the cause for our gifted children. You are needed, appreciated, and even though it doesn't always seem so, you are not alone. Keep the faith. Your cause is noble, and the results of your work will truly change the world.

Susan Cole
Past President
Gifted Association of Missouri

Reprinted from a portion of a speech given to New Teachers Workshop, Jefferson City, Missouri 1985.

EXTENDING A CHILD'S THINKING

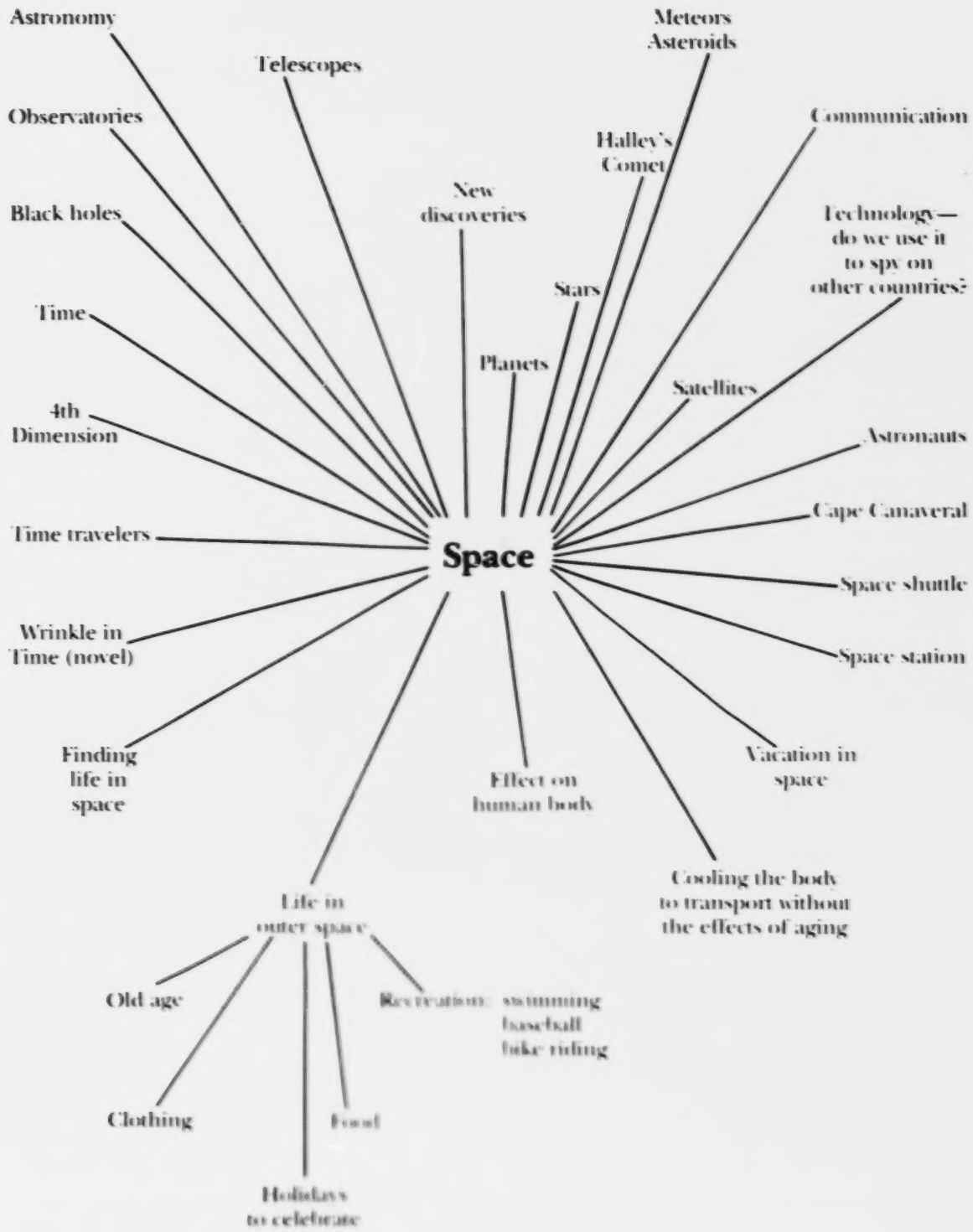
Parents and teachers have numerous opportunities during each day to extend the thinking of a child. Dr. Benjamin Bloom has divided thinking skills into six levels, which gradually require more creative and serious thought. These thinking skills are important for all children to develop, but especially important for gifted children who possess greater potential. Too often, we only require that children demonstrate thinking skills from the first three levels. It is imperative to make opportunities for higher levels of thinking to be practiced.

Bloom's Levels of Thinking

Knowledge:	requires a child to recognize, identify, list, name, locate
Comprehension:	a child will rephrase, interpret, reorder, conclude, distinguish, explain
Application:	show, make, illustrate, construct
Analysis:	classify, compare, contrast, investigate, categorize, deduce
Synthesis:	compose, invent, create, design, write, produce, plan, develop
Evaluation:	decide, evaluate, verify, judge, select, defend.

To extend any topic or area of interest, brainstorm all the ideas you can think of that even remotely relate to that topic. Then use different levels of thinking to create activities, or things to do, with your brainstormed ideas. Use the verbs listed above at each level of thinking to decide what to do. Use the list of products to decide how the child can show others what he has learned as he has progressed through the levels of thinking.

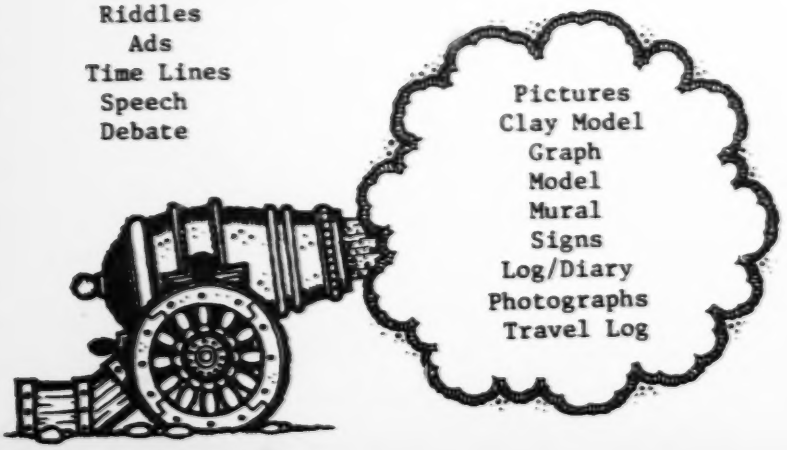
Brainstormed Ideas About Space



Products for the Cognitive Levels

Photographs
Travel Log
Slides
Costumes
Story
Song
T-Shirt

Article
Book
Riddles
Ads
Time Lines
Speech
Debate



It is possible to apply various levels of thinking to children's nursery stories. The following is an example of what can be done with a well-known children's story to encourage the child to think beyond merely retelling the tale. Use this form with other stories your child enjoys. Encourage your child to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Knowledge:	Name the rooms Goldilocks went into in the bears' house. Recall how many bears are in the family.
Comprehension:	Explain why the bears left the house. Show how the bears ate their porridge.
Application:	What things would Goldilocks find at your house and not at her house?
	What kind of a "house" do real bears live in?
Analysis:	Why did the bears feel the way they did when they returned home?
	Compare the bears' house in the story to a real bear's cave.
Synthesis:	Design a people-proof house for bears.
	How would this story be different if it took place underwater?
Evaluation:	Was Goldilocks a good girl or a bad girl?
	What items from your house would be useful to a bear in his cave?

Compiled by Pat Hoelscher, Supervisor, Gifted Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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Future Problem Solving Program, Dr. Anne B. Crabbe, National Director, St. Andrews College, Laurinburg, North Carolina 28352.

Junior Great Books, Junior Great Books Foundation, 400 Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

*Most helpful.

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